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No. 390

## WORK!

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

Work, for up the eastern sky  
The morning will not wait;  
Chances come and pass us by  
While we stand and hesitate—  
Doubting, waiting, faint of heart,  
Till we find we are too late.  
Work! the morning will not wait.  
While we stand and hesitate.  
Work! our lives before us lie  
Like the marble, shapeless still;  
We must shape it to success  
With an earnest heart and will.  
It is in our hands to choose—  
Shall we choose for good or ill?  
Work! the day is precious fast  
Brave us to do and dare  
In the world's great labor-fields,  
There is work for us to share,  
Earnest hearts and willing hands  
Find a mission everywhere.  
Ah! the morning will not wait,  
While we stand and hesitate.

## The Bitter Secret;

THE HEART OF GOLD.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

### CHAPTER V.

WAITING AND SEEING.

AND that was Otto Derwent, her father! With blazing cheeks the girl sat and thought of him, scanning again, with mental gaze, the tall, stalwart figure, the proud, picturesque countenance, the dominant manner, the dashing, courageous, *bon-camerade* style of the man who had let his wife perish alone in Loango.

How lightly his sorrow sat upon him! Why, her mother had looked at least ten years older when she died!

As Monica played with the fried ham and eggs and weak tea served to her by Dame Hicks, she plied that personage with questions that set her volatile tongue wagging continuously, and rendered the stranger lady so much more interesting a guest than the dozen of hungry hunters who reveled in the big hall, that she passed over these magnates to her husband, and devoted herself to the one lone little girl.

And Monica, with her dark, glimmering eyes fastened full upon the dark's raw-boned face, knew her on and on, till she had told all she knew about Dornoch-Weald and its noble master.

According to Mrs. Hicks, "the master," as she delighted to call him, was so obstinate in his celibacy, and withal so brilliant, fascinating and popular among the ladies, that the highest in the land had as good as offered herself to him, while all the county ladies, belles and heiresses, as well as peeresses in their own right, were breaking their necks after him, without the smallest reward.

"For a girl, she's an' a joyous liver," said the old dame, "an' she's an' queer about mycrys'! the Lord only knows what he means for to do for an' heir! him that hates his nephew, Geoffrey Kilmyre, fit to shoot him—him as used for to fairly worship the lad! And in my opinion, as well as the whole countrysides, a proper man, and a gallanter, never stepped across Dornoch-Weald threshold; a bit harum-scarum maybe, but, Lord! that's better than foxin' and wigglin' like snakes around the master's heels, like the next after him again—I mean them two rouses as were her a minute ago with him! Rufus an' Gavaine Marshall, Geoffrey, ye see, 're right down Dornoch-Weald, why shouldn't he, being the master's own sista, when them sours aren't nothin' but distant relatives, ever so far removed, sons of—would ye believe it, nothin' but a tailor! and with neither the souls nor the bodies of our Derwents, God bless the race!"

"And he—Mr. Derwent, I mean—is he kind to a woman—a good man?" demanded the listener, disdainfully.

"Humph! I dunno what may your ideas be!" He suits us—lets us a-be, and that's what a single man should," retorted the inn-keeper's wife. "If the young woman as has been hanging on these ten year at the Weald would only keep her nose out of our concerns, like the master does, she'd suit us better too, I'll wager."

"Who is she?"

"Oh, another far-off relation; at least she says so, an' has been a-tryin' to ketch the bed-room, situated in a distant part of the wide-spread rambling cottage, by all that's not her! he! he! an' so they say up at the hall that of late she's set her cap for young Master Geoffrey, an' that she's in a fair way of hookin' him, too. But it'll be a sad day for Dornoch when Godiva Montacute gets to be mistress of the Weald."

"Young, you say?"

"Jest of age, miss, twenty-one, and as sly a serpent as ever crawled. It's my opinion, an' I don't care who hears me say so, that she's that mad at the master for never lookin' her way, that she'd stick her bodkin in her heart, any day, if she had a chance; an' if ever anything amiss do happen to him, I'll know who done it."

And the giantess nodded her great head gloomily, gazing with a disgusted frown into vacancy.

Monica felt a singular stir at the heart, and a queer, unaccountable craving to see the human face to face. Yet, although she was spoken of as the enemy of the Master of Dornoch-Weald, it was not kindred feeling that animated the American girl, who had come here in the character of an avenger.

"Go on! tell me more," said she, settling herself with yet deeper attention, to the dame's great gratification, for she loved to declaim on the affairs of her betters. "Where is Geoffrey Kilmyre, and what?"

"Oh, he's a rovin' blade. He don't trouble the Weal much, especially since the master turned him out of Dornoch for wanting to marry a poor girl as was governess in the parson's family."



"Hush, dear boy, hush!" and there was malignity-germ enough in her tones for both."

"Ah!" cried Monica, derisively, "the Master of Dornoch-Weald does not like poor girls, does he?"

"Well, this 'un weren't much, anyhow, an' who but a bad devil like Master Geoffrey would think 'scatin' the like, with mayther blood nor bone, at the head of the table where princesses sat?"

"Well, did the young man assert his independence, and marry her in spite of his uncle, or did he prove a craven and abandon her for the sake of his uncle's wealth?"

"Land! how your eyes do shine, miss! Did he marry Nell Wyvern, say you? No, for, as good luck 'u'ave it, she showed herself up time, for the bold, brazen hussy she was, an' run off with parson's eldest son, a captain in the guards; whenever he 'fied out that parson he never lost everything if he married her; an' she not even expectin' to marry Tom Grindon. Ugh! Master Geoffrey may thank his stars for his escape. It broke the heart of parson's wife, as sweet a lady as ever trod in Dornoch; she died in a month; an' parson himself, he never held up his poor head since; for the lad was a good son till she come to blacken his soul. She's in Lunnon this very day, a-ridin'. In her ker-ridge among all the other brazen wenches, an' Tom Grindon's forgot ages ago, and gone to the dogs. Well, Master Geoffrey war well rid of her; but for all that, he never forgave her, and he's a bad man, them on account of the gal's low birth; so he's very seldom at the Weald now, but keeps himself to his own big, lonesome house in Cornlea, an' meanwhile them reptiles, the Marshalls, keeps close by the master's ear; Satan only knows what lies they tell about our young master; and that other fox, Godiva Montacute, keeps a-writin' constant to Master Geoffrey, drawin' him, fine as a wire, into her net, though how she means to get the property for him ag'in' two such imps as them Marshalls is past me. Well, well, thank God, the master's as hale an' hearty as any one 'em yet, an' comin' ride to hounds with the foreman; it may be within the Riding; prouder by far of his ancient lineage than many a high-bred boy, more newly ennobled; his private character was a strange mixture of princely *bonhomie* toward his wife and icy impenetrability toward all, high or low who ventured to tread so close to his real nature."

Monica was obliged to hire a room at the inn; she shrank from the task of dissimulation with all the repulsion of a high-toned nature, and felt it impossible to intrude under false pretenses upon the stricken man at the parsonage; it was only her father whom she could contemplate deceiving without one pang of compunction.

She took a room at the "Dornoch Arms" for a few weeks, and determined to obtain a room or other sombre place close by the Weald. She gave out to the inn people that she had come to their village among the woods for change of air, her pale and emaciated appearance suggesting instantly recent illness among the ruddy and robust Northern peasants; and she took care to make it known that if the air agreed with her, she would be thankful to get some post at the Mansion House, being too poor to live idle upon her money.

But the days passed, and nothing came of her stay, except that she made herself thoroughly familiar with the grounds of Dornoch-Weald, as well as for miles around among the forests.

And then fate gave her her will; a door opened where she least looked for it, and the way was clear.

She had not caught another glimpse of Mr. Derwent; neither had she seen the woman who now divided her thoughts with him—Godiva Montacute, the wily connection. The brothers Marshall she often saw and eluded; they made a habit of riding past the inn, and of stopping to call for a stirrup-cup of milk here and there, but always with a hope of snatching another glimpse of the pale and lustrous-eyed stranger who, whom they had discovered asleep on the wooden settle.

She had successfully avoided not only them, but all the cavaliers at the Mansion; she was cautious as to when and where she took her walks, and confined herself to her room, as long as they loitered about the inn.

This reserve piqued their curiosity; as they would have "her out of her hole," as they would have it, and hunted her.

She was soon afterward conducted to her bedroom, situated in a distant part of the wide-spread rambling cottage, by all that's not her! he! he! an' so they say up at the hall that of late she's set her cap for young Master Geoffrey, an' that she's in a fair way of hookin' him, too. But it'll be a sad day for Dornoch when Godiva Montacute gets to be mistress of the Weald.

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For the Master of Dornoch-Weald was said through all the county to be the proudest man

boulder, half-lost amid the shadows and the intricate tracery of naked boughs.

As usual, Monica had brought a book with her, and this she had now calculated to chain her interest much, if not for a few hours.

She had obtained permission from the sexton of the Little Chapel to use the library of theological works which moulder in the vestry, and these volumes changed to be of the driest and most dogmatic type; so she had also provided herself with a piece of lace-work, which she made almost as exquisitely as her mother, and with more originality of design, and on which she now built some hopes of making a subsistence.

She was weary with a long walk, and sat in a high-backed chair, her eyes fixed upon those distant turrets, when the quiet rustle of some light trailing thing overlast year leaves attracted her attention.

She turned in every direction, seeking that

that mist of crossing twigs, with its slight vailings of just peeping green; then the rustling stopped, and she heard a quick, firm step, and a clear merry whistle, coming shrilling up from the valley below. It was answered from the point where the rustling had ceased, by the warbling of a bird, so very cleverly and deftly done, that it was—*she* had never seen the like. The rustling began again, and standing up, she saw coming apparently straight toward her nook, a tall woman in a vapory sort of pale gray gown, that scarcely showed through the silvery grayness of the trees, only that it moved, and that something copper-red shone on the head of it, and something roseate white where the face might be.

As she looked, not doubtin' but that the lady had seen her and was coming to speak to her, the firm step all the while coming springing up from the valley, the lady stood still, behind the enormous girth of a centenarian oak, and a green-man spring beside her.

At the two met, Monica who saw them in profile, though the great tree hid them completely from the windows of the Mansion, perceived the tall, slim lady put out two long white hands with an impulsive grace, which the gentle man, when he was up to her, gathered quickly in one of his, shook them gayly, and dropped, throwing himself back then against the trunk, while he gazed at her in silence for perhaps a minute, his riding-cap in his hand, and his smile.

And Monica who could see his face distinctly

now, in the clear light of the noonday beams.

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now, in the clear light of the noonday beams.

It was clear that whatever he might be to

the world, he was at least beyond the pleasant moment of her luncheon.

"Do you think so? Thank you!" murmured she softly, and Monica could see mentally the mock-maiden side glance and the evil shrewdness of the hidden heart of her as she said it.

"Well, you are a good little thing—I beg your pardon—*little* is scarcely the term to describe a woman of your majesty; but somehow you always seem to me babyish enough for the endearment, in spite of your six feet of statuesque perfection."

"Anything you say by way of endearment,

Geoffrey is vicious—is; I should rather say, welcome to me; as you know, I have had little love in my life."

"Poor child! That's the way with most of us. I dare swear. However, I need not keep you out in this wilderness talking sentiment. Let's to business. You wrote for me, and here I am. What is it?"

"Oh me! How sternly you can look at me! Did I do wrong to write you, Geoffrey? Indeed—it was out of the purest."

"There—there—don't cry, dear soul. What under heaven have I said now, to stir up the pathetics in your foolish little heart? For a large woman, and rather a sensible one, you are the worst baby! There, that's right; you look more practical now. You were right enough in summoning me to Dornoch-Weald, if my uncle was in any trouble which I could avert. Little cause as he has shown me to worthily fulfil my duty upon him, I can't hear of his worries without at least wanting to offer my help. What is the matter?"

"Let me collect my reasoning faculties a moment, Mr. Kilmyre. I must not waste your time or forbearance getting out the matter in my own words, for I have no time to waste."

It was clear that the "Lily-Maid" required

some time to crush down the rage and mortification his careless words had roused in her; any woman would have recognized the anger which burned in those quivering half-suppressed tones, and in the quick swish of her robe over the dead leaves as she passed to and fro.

Geoffrey Kilmyre evidently did not read these signs aright. After uttering a slight laugh at her closing words, the snap of a match and the curl of smoke like smoke rising over the spot where her wood betokened familiarity with which he had lit his cigar, and the careless nonchalance with which he meant to await the revelation his kinswoman had summoned him to hear.

Soon her promenade ended, and her voice sounded, low and delicate, through the ancient forest.

"Did you know that Rufus and Gavaine Mar-

shall were here on a six weeks' visit?"

"By Jove! no! The Marshalls? What can the poor old feller mean?"

"How does his master get along with the sneaking curse? I'm bad enough—the son of a Cornlea cotton-processor."

"Oh, Geoffrey! Geoffrey! GEOFFREY!"

Geoffrey's laugh, the laugh of an honest man, rung out merrily; its sarcasm could not make it even malicious.

Drogheda himself; not a hint of their extraction, only that they are distant connections; and as they have been well, even showily educated, and appear to have mixed in good society, they make a good appearance, and no one would take them for anything else than gentlemen. They have been here three weeks now, and at that time they have contrived to become so necessary to Mr. Derwent, that he is never seen without one or the other of them at his heels. Of course in one way there is nothing wonderful in this; but the way in which they have succeeded in separating him from his old friends, and have converted them from obscurity on the occasion of their expulsion two years ago, he has kept up a correspondence with them, as well as visiting them now and again at their own homes. But now they are really his principal guests. Does he meet an excursion, there they are, ready with hand and head to take everything but the enjoyment of him; does he speak of ball or masque, who so ingeniously and so adroit to bring it about, not only with success, but with a unique fancy and originality that flatters and charms him; does he wish for sentiment, call for Rufus and Gavaine; the muses, Rufus and Gavaine, the arts, Rufus and Gavaine; best of all, an unexpected occasion to call for Rufus and Gavaine. And the lady's attitude of intent listening, as well as her anxious consultation of the watch at her girdle, that some other person was expected, and yet so modestly, that not the most captious of the guests can miss their host! Ah, Heaven! when I watch these terrible men basking under his pleased and musing glance, and think of you thrust out, thought of with freezing coldness, never mentioned at all, and your very portrait turned to the wall, my heart turns in my bosom! I have dared to keep your memory alive, notwithstanding his frowns and angry, goading taunts—I dare no more—if you only guessed what he tortures me by saying—I who know so little about money that I never can distinguish between the two, who would serve you the same if you were really so penniless as he means to wish you were."

The narrator broke off with thick crowding sobs; they were so very naturally done, so convulsive, so eloquent of long and bravely-repressed sorrow and distress, that, by the low murmur that next came through the wood, Monica guessed that the deluded Geoffrey was caressing her in some kind way, and whispering thanks and praises in her ear.

With all the scornful curiosity of a proudly genuine nature, that observes the full iniquity of a false and wicked one, she rose and looked.

For all her hard work, Godiva had only won the small triumph of Geoffrey's hand on her drooping head, which he was patting and stroking gently.

And so, fearing that they were on the high-road to supplicate me in my uncle's will, "you wrote for me to appear on the scene," said he, presently raising his comforting tones and returning to his place, the moment she had so far repressed her emotion as to return her handkerchief to her pocket. "And what did you expect me to do in self-defense, my dear?" he added, obviously more from curiosity to hear her idea than to obtain information on the important point.

"Do!" echoed she, almost sharply; "why, Geoffrey is it you, who have so much at stake, who asks me, the humblest person in the house, and the least interested, what you should do?"

"My dear girl, do you know that you made rather a pertinent insinuation in that last remark?"

"Eh! what can you mean?" muttered she, in some confusion.

"Oh, you didn't mean it at all, of course, you little goose; but it is just confoundedly true that you are the least interested party connected with this beastly business, because whoever of us, the tailor or I, eventually turn out master of yonder mansion, you won't suffer; I don't forget Rufus Marshall's old penchant toward you; you see, you're safe."

"Oh, Geoffrey, Geoffrey! how little do you know poor, friendless Godiva Montacute!" she said. "I was much disgusted with her last sight of the lady to remain, looking, I shall never turn from your cause, dear, never desert your standard for theirs, were you to be disinherited to-morrow!"

"Thanks, little girl; therein you show your warmth of heart and utter folly in charming unison. Indeed I don't think I ought to encourage you to revolt from the ruling powers, especially since it is really a matter that does not touch you in the least. I mean my well or ill fare. Drop me, little one; I shan't feel aggrieved. You've no right to turn your back upon a young, devoted and thriving suitor, for the sake of a poor, unlucky devil who isn't even in love with you."

How could she take that? Involuntarily Monica rose up to see; her foot slipped among the dry twigs and leaves with a faint rustling noise, and the face of the young lady, which had been bowed on her bosom in her favorite attitude of infantile submission and sadness, flushed up with the remains of a fierce whiteness, scowl upon it, to listen, with dilated eyes and a sinister keenness in every strained feature. She did not see Monica; she looked obliquely past her, into the depths of the forest; and after a moment's breathless suspense, as the sound was not repeated, she turned eagerly to her companion.

"Some one may come; I dare not be seen by human eye communing with you, not only because of the proprieties, but for sake of your wretched shadow hear—your uncle, I mean, on them too—that I was on such terms with you, they would conceal even from the eye of a spy, and I could not assist you at all. This is what I think you should do. Come boldly on a visit to your uncle; make some excuse; here is the list of guests at the mansion; if there's a soul among them you know, say you were encouraged to venture to your old home—put it to see him or her; once regain a footing, and gentleness and submission to his will in everything will soon bring you back all his goodwill. He can't forget that you are of the blood, a true Derwent, whilst they—but, I must go, Geoffrey, indeed."

"And shall I stoop to these accursed dissimulations, do you think girl?" demanded the young man, with biting contempt. "Not I! Let Derwent do as he likes with his wealth, I shan't define my fingers crooking the wire after it! If the old fellow was in trouble, or ill, I might swallow my pride and come to him, but not for this reason. My good girl, I have always thought that your moral perceptions were rather blunt, but this—"

"Oh, don't rebuke me—don't!" sobbed the lad, in the most afflicted manner. "I have not had half time to present the case as it really is; I have thought only of your interests, and forgotten his altogether. You must come, and insistently, Geoffrey."

"Don't ask me again to sneak into my uncle's good graces, Godiva, or I shall never look on your face more," he burst forth, haughtily.

"Wait a minute! what I do ask," she retorted, in a tone that suggested clinched teeth and a raging heart. "Your uncle is in trouble, is ill, or I should never have dared to come for self-redemption alone; nor could I have asked you to come for self-redemption alone. He is in trouble—for I don't trust these men—do you hear? I don't trust them near him, night and day, as long as self-interest actuates them."

"My God! is there?"

"Hush! hush!" panted she, in startling agitation; "I would have given much not to have been obliged to tell you this; I know nothing, only that so very much depends upon Mr. Derwent's will, and after his will is made—on his death—that I tremble at the wonderful influence which these brothers have already gained over him, and the patient persistency with which they haunt him. Come, come and watch with me, Geoffrey, if you ever loved your poor kind uncle!"

Tears and sobs, quivering accents, pauses, hurry—no wonder if the young man gazed at his companion in utter shocked and unquestioning credence.

"You said, 'in trouble, and ill'—is he ill, Godiva?" asked he, urgently.

"He does his best to cheat us all," was the wily answer; "he goes as usual about all his usual pursuits; but I can see—who am watching with anguish—how changed he really is; how death-pale at times, what fluctuating spirits, no appetite, unnatural motions of frozen reverie, all watched with the horrid intensity of fate, by the brothers! And when his weary eyes light on the back of your neck—such a wretched, yearning, grievous look!"

"Let me go; why did you not say all this at first? cried Geoffrey impetuously. "Good God, girl, you should have sent for me at the very beginning. My poor lonely old fellow! Heavens! what a brute I've been, to abandon him to any vile pack of fortune-hunters!"

"Go—go at once then—quick! I hear some one!" hissed Godiva, abruptly laying her hands on his shoulders, and fairly pushing him a few steps down the incline. He submitted to the motive power, and strode off under its impetus down the hill to the Weald.

Monica, still standing, with lynx eyes glued to the schemer, was debating with herself whether she should reveal her presence, curious to see the effect of such an unexpected occurrence. She had been told of the secret, the perceived, the lady's attitude of intent listening, as well as her anxious consultation of the watch at her girdle, that some other person was expected.

"What! Geoffrey Kilmyre?" roared Rufus, getting blood-red with fury and jealousy; "did that dog ever dare to look at you?"

"Hush! What does it matter? I would never have married him, even to save my life; I had seen you first," said the traitress.

"But, say, did he ever make love to you?" muttered Rufus doggedly. Godiva cast a keen glance upon the lowly Godiva passed into her line of vision, not half a dozen feet from her, and stopped dead still.

By the excitement on her smiling face, and the gracefully outstretched arms, Monica saw that this interview was of a more interesting nature even than the last, and waited in breathless suspense for the arrival of the other party to it.

She had not half a minute to wait; still standing in an attitude of perfect grace and elegance, exquisitely heightened in effect by the gracious smile of welcome that wreathed the lovely scarlet lips, Godiva was joined by another young gentleman, who, however, did not cover his face with a cordial handshake, but took the lesson from Rufus. In his hand he held a shower of kisses on her ripe and answering lips.

Then he held her off at arm's length to look at her with fond admiration, and Monica beheld the features of the man whose laugh had awakened her as she slept on the wooden settle in the inn parlor—Rufus Marshall!

#### CHAPTER VII.

"*SATAN'S IMP.*" were the first delighted words that broke the enraptured spell, uttered by the young man as he drew Godiva Montacute again to his breast, and pillowing her burnished head there, patted and smoothed it with trembling hands. "You are, after all, fond of me; don't let me go!"

"I'm afraid I am, Rufus," breathed the siren, faintly, nestling still closer with a fascinating little movement of shy love. "But, oh, dear! what good is it going to do either of us? You know I dare never marry you, dear, under existing circumstances!"

Rufus Marshall was a colorless, undersized young man of some twenty-nine years; his eyes were pale and small, the iris curiously flecked with orange flakes, which in moments of excitement, blending with the faint green of the ground-color, produced in them a green phosphorescence. His mustache was long, waxed at the tips and ivory white; his lips under it, thin and sharp-drawn, wearing an expression of anxiety and avarice; his hair was almost as thin as his mustache, and fell over a bony head there, patted and smoothed it with trembling hands. "You are, after all, fond of me; don't let me go!"

"I'm afraid I am, Rufus," she said, in some confusion.

"Oh, you didn't mean it at all, of course, you little goose; but it is just confoundedly true that you are the least interested party connected with this beastly business, because whoever of us, the tailor or I, eventually turn out master of yonder mansion, you won't suffer; I don't forget Rufus Marshall's old penchant toward you; you see, you're safe."

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"Thanks, little girl; therein you show your warmth of heart and utter folly in charming unison. Indeed I don't think I ought to encourage you to revolt from the ruling powers, especially since it is really a matter that does not touch you in the least. I mean my well or ill fare. Drop me, little one; I shan't feel aggrieved. You've no right to turn your back upon a young, devoted and thriving suitor, for the sake of a poor, unlucky devil who isn't even in love with you."

How could she take that? Involuntarily Monica rose up to see; her foot slipped among the dry twigs and leaves with a faint rustling noise, and the face of the young lady, which had been bowed on her bosom in her favorite attitude of infantile submission and sadness, flushed up with the remains of a fierce whiteness, scowl upon it, to listen, with dilated eyes and a sinister keenness in every strained feature. She did not see Monica; she looked obliquely past her, into the depths of the forest; and after a moment's breathless suspense, as the sound was not repeated, she turned eagerly to her companion.

"I had some trouble finding our trysting place," said Rufus presently, when he was tired of the refreshment of kissing those luring lips, he waved his short square hand toward Monica. "I'm not so used to wildwood as you, Loveliest; but, please God, I shall one day be lord of all we two look upon this moment, with you by my side again." And the wretched caught him to him again in a burst of undignified chuckling, for it could scarce be called, as he expressed it, triumph.

Monica could see the shiver of repulsion that passed through Godiva, who, however, took evident care not to display it to him, replying with sweet softness:

"May it be so, dear Rufus, for what is to be come of your poor Godiva if that dissolute, half-demon, Kilmyre, rules as master? I shall be thrust out, adrift, penniless, friendless." She turned aside her head to weep.

"The deuce! We'll see about that!" snarled the low, almost black malignity clouding his ignoble features. "So pretty, don't cry to spoil our darling eyes; there's not one of us between you and such a fate. Happily, if I am all head, he possessed high shoulders, was angular, and, though fashionably dressed and carrying himself with trained propriety, resembled one constantly of his low extraction.

"I had some trouble finding our trysting place," said Rufus presently, when he was tired of the refreshment of kissing those luring lips, he waved his short square hand toward Monica. "I'm not so used to wildwood as you, Loveliest; but, please God, I shall one day be lord of all we two look upon this moment, with you by my side again." And the wretched caught him to him again in a burst of undignified chuckling, for it could scarce be called, as he expressed it, triumph.

Monica could see the shiver of repulsion that passed through Godiva, who, however, took evident care not to display it to him, replying with sweet softness:

"All the better for us. Who would believe that we could gain an ascendancy over such a man as Derwent in such a short time? Come, both of 'em are gone and our work is not yet done. We must hasten through with it, under cover of these thirteen strangers, all of whom will share in the suspicion of foul play with us two, if there is any, which I'll go bail there won't be, if my head does not fail me. Trust me for clean-scheming!"

"What do you propose?" muttered Godiva, her eyes on the ground.

"Nothing yet; I want you to help me to devise a plan. You've been sharp as a razor, and quick as a rat thus far, and I'm sure you can help now if you want to. The will is made, Rufus and Gavaine Marshall are named co-heirs, with a large bequest to his beloved relative, Godiva Montacute. His nephew Geoffrey was to my constant protest in his behalf, 'Now, thanks to you, I have an excellent opportunity to enumerate his incredible iniquities and insolent revilements of his uncle; Derwent will never again be worked up to such a pitch of indignation against Kilmyre, who may turn compunction and come back any day, to the utter ruin of all our schemes; for all we can do is but a passing influence, which one sight of him will dispel; don't you see, my girl, that we must strike while the iron is hot?'"

"But your acquaintance with him is such a new thing—"

"All the better for us. Who would believe that we could gain an ascendancy over such a man as Derwent in such a short time? Come, both of 'em are gone and our work is not yet done. We must hasten through with it, under cover of these thirteen strangers, all of whom will share in the suspicion of foul play with us two, if there is any, which I'll go bail there won't be, if my head does not fail me. Trust me for clean-scheming!"

"How can I?" muttered she, turning paler. "You havn't lived for ten years in this daily presence without knowing all about his habits, his constitution, his little mental traits, and so on. Through these you can suggest some safe idea."

"I scarcely see how; put any questions; I shall answer what I can."

"Well, about his habits. Has he any out-of-the-way habit that might be twisted to our advantage, should we wish him to—be suddenly struck while the iron is hot?"

"What was that? What was that being spoken? Had he not put a strange emphasis on the word 'heaveth'?"

The sweep of her arm as she carried her hand to her face, to dash the mist from her vision and the oozing sweat from her brow, startled the pair; they turned with one accord their faces toward her, and she read in these two blenched and contracted visages—DEATH.

"The deuce! We'll see about that!" snarled the low, almost black malignity clouding his ignoble features. "So pretty, don't cry to spoil our darling eyes; there's not one of us between you and such a fate. Happily, if I am all head, he possessed high shoulders, was angular, and, though fashionably dressed and carrying himself with trained propriety, resembled one constantly of his low extraction.

"I had no reason to doubt you," she said. "I'm afraid I have an enemy; Why is he so?"

"I cannot answer."

"I know him well. He is always so pleasant to me. Why met him but yesterday, and he was as genial as ever."

"Then he is a hypocrite!" she exclaimed, "for he has sought to injure you in my estimation. He has spoken of you as—" she hesitated, and became silent.

"I know what you mean," he quietly replied.

"He refers to a matter which I have had no occasion to mention to you, though I might have been sure some of my kind friends would. I am a gentleman, Miss Andrews, if there is a shadow of doubt upon my birth."

"If it mattered to nobody I'd be drinking the root every night," she said. "Well, let's hear about his mental peculiarities."

"He has none."

"Con—found it! He must have some, girl."

"Perhaps—I know of none. Suggest."

"Has he no superstition—no belief in some old family wrath?"

"Ha! ha! ha! How little you know that!"

"No, no, no. Yet—stay—he has not imagination—a most vivid and original imagination!"

"Yes. And I added to it, a peculiar susceptibility of organization; he has that."

"I scarcely understand, I suppose."

"Well, he is one of those all too sensitive people, that if one got him to believe that she did not even dare to shake his rude clutch off, although it was in his delicately-bred work."

"What's come over you now?" she asked, looking into the depths of her troubled eyes.

She attempted to rise, saying in a trembling tone: "You must let me go. It is time I was at home."

He was bending eagerly over her, looking into the depths of her troubled eyes.

She caught her hand and forced her to sit still.

"I do not ask you to say anything; not a word," he protested.

"Far be it from me to permit that to influence me against you. Worth, with me, is better than birth."

Her rapid disclaimer gratified him.

"Mr. Williamson is a suitor of yours?"

"Yes," was the reluctant reply.

"Not a favored one?"

"You are asking too much, sir."

"I know he is not!" was his eager rejoinder.

"I know it is jealous spite that is influencing him against me. He knew of your lessons with me. He knew—" he paused irresolutely, then quickly continued, "He knew that I loved you! Is that all he knew? Had he reason to imagine that I loved you not in vain?"

He was bending eagerly over her, looking into the depths of her troubled eyes.

a cloak of sadness about her, I would jump into the Schuykill, and put an end to Jack Bounce at one bounce. That is my answer, Will."

Will had no answer to make, but seemed full of deep thought.

Meanwhile, Miss Milton went slowly downstairs. Near the bottom of the stairs she met a young gentleman coming up.

She lifted her head in heavy manner, and encountered a pair of brown eyes fixed earnestly upon her. A strange feeling affected her as she looked eagerly into the face before her.

It was unknown to her, yet there was something that set her brain in a whirl which it had not known for many days. Who was it? To whom did those eyes belong? she asked herself continually, as the handsome face photographed itself on her brain, like a picture from that far past in which all the joy of her life resided.

And Harry Spenser went up the stairs with a feeling like that of the mariner, who has caught a fleeting glimpse of the Fortunate Islands, on which fate forbids him to land.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

##### DICK'S CAT GETTING OUT OF THE BAG.

MR. WILLIAMSON was taking a quiet stroll in Chestnut street that same afternoon when his quick eyes encountered a face that gave him a sudden start. He looked again keenly into the fine but sad womanly features before him.

He then quietly turned away, as if not wishing to be seen himself, and affected to be deeply interested in a store-window.

"She here!" he said to himself, in deep surprise. "What could have brought her from Boston? She who has been almost a hermit, I can think of but one cause: some new illusion about her son."

He followed her until he saw her enter the Continental Hotel.

"So far well," he thought. "She is safe for the present, but I must know what her object is. She cannot be on the true track? Yet who knows? The best-made work may drop to pieces from the loss of a screw. I wish Parker was here now. There seems to be some bad luck about everything in which that fellow is engaged. I must write to him at once. And now I had best see Mother Shipton."

This resolution was suddenly taken, and he turned with a rapid step to execute it. Sharp as he was, he had failed to observe two persons who had watched the whole by-play of his recent movements. One of these was Ned Hogan, with his sign hung out in the shape of his inevitable meerschaum. The other was Dick Darling, as well marked by a peculiar feature of his attire. The frequent wettings his new suit had received had proved too much for its powers of resistance. It had shrunk upon him until now the clothes seemed a part of his skin, and the unsolved mystery was how he had got into them, and how he was ever going to get out of them. Dick could not have answered himself, as he had not been out of his clothes since his last two dips overboard.

"Now's our time," he quickly. "That cove's my game. Wish I knew who the woman was. Let's arter him; I think there's smethin' afloat."

"Who is he, Dick?" asked Hogan, anxiously, as he followed the eager boy down the opposite side of the street to that pursued by Williamson.

"He's the bit of bacon that I've got in my pickle barrel, and that I'm going to salt down, sure. I won't sell nobody that I ain't bought and paid for, Hogan, but I kalkerlate I'll soon own this chap."

"Is he one of the men whom you fancy to be connected with the counterfeiting business?"

"Yes. And with another business that's about as deep and wide. It's gettin' ripe. I'll be ready to knock my apples off the tree in a day or two now."

"I hope you are not making a fool of me, Dick, warned Hogan, doubtfully. "If you are, I'll be burst if I don't smash my pipe over your thundering busy head!"

"All right, Ned Hogan. I'll give you some pints before half-an-hour that might open your eyes. Wait till we hole our game. Did you ever see such a fit as them trowers?"

Dick indeed had some trouble in his locomotion in consequence of his excessively tight fit. Hogan laughed as he looked down at the boy's attenuated legs.

"How are you ever going to get them off, Dick?"

"That's what's a-troublin' me," confessed Dick, dubiously. "Feared I'll have to be melted down and run out themer."

They had now kept within full view of Williamson for several squares. The streets here became less frequented and they found it advisable to fall further back, barely keeping him in sight.

"We are on the track of somethin'," announced Dick. "I've followed this cove twenty times before, and I've noticed whenever he's on some deep lay, he's just as cautious as a fox. Look how he keeps his eyes goin'. He catched me one at it. Bet he don't again."

They were now in a very disreputable part of the city. There were here a number of small streets noted for the horrible filth and iniquity of their inmates—the leprosy spot in a great city.

Williamson turned quickly into one of these streets, after glancing warily around. His two pursuers ran rapidly forward to the corner of the street in which he had disappeared.

He was just entering a tumble-down frame house—or would be better name—about half-way down the street.

"You stay here, Dick," said Hogan. "I will find out who lives there."

He advanced and entered into conversation with the officer who had charge of this very unpleasant beat.

It was ten minutes before he returned.

"I'll swear I don't know what a well-dressed man like him wants in such a hole," he averred.

"Mebbe I know who lives there!" answered Dick.

"Oh, an outrageous old crone, whom the folks in these parts christen Mother Shipton. She makes her money by begging, or generally by sending some baby out to whine for her. She is said to be never short of a new baby, if one happens to drop off."

"Then she's my meat!" cried Dick, joyfully. "It's a hundred-dollar job we've struck to-day. I'll let you inter what I'm arter soon, Hogan. Jist take another short walk with me."

Ned grew somewhat restive over Dick's persistent mysteriousness. But he was excessively anxious to know what the boy was after, and Dick would not let out a word; so he performe accompanied him.

Their way led now to Arch street, and ended at the hotel patronized by the government detectives.

"Misters Bounce and Frazer in?" asked Dick, in his independent manner, of the clerk.

"I don't know," was that individual's short

answer. "You might find them in their room."

"Come ahead then, Hogan. I've blazed the way before."

"You will find them in the rear parlor on the second floor," said a waiter who stood near the clerk's desk. "They have company."

"Oh, that makes no odds to me," replied Dick. "If they kin stand the pressure of company, I kin."

"Who are these men, Dick?" asked Hogan, as they ascended the stairs.

"A pair of my detectives."

"A brace of government chaps. You oughter know them."

"But what do you want with them?"

"Why, you don't kalkerate I kin put all my jobs through with one! Got too much bizness on hand for that. Things is gettin' ripe, Hogan; that's why I'm goin' to intercede with you all now."

Before Hogan could ask any more questions, Dick had abruptly opened the door of the parlor in question, and walked in, suddenly breaking off a close conference between Harry Spenser and the officers.

"Back ag'in, you see," was his free-and-easy greeting. "How do, Mr. Spenser. Didn't 'spect to catch you here."

"I wish you had been back a half-hour sooner," said Jack.

"What for?—but stop just a minit. Want to intercede with you to Mr. Edward Hogan. He's one of Pinkerton's—Mr. Hogan, this is Mr. Jack Bounce and Mr. Will Frazer; two gentlemen in government service. Hope you'll know about another."

This introduction was made with great grandiloquence of tone, and a graceful wave of the hand.

Dick, however, hardly gave them time to acknowledge his formal introduction before he was at them again with questions.

"What did you want me for a half an hour ago?"

"The Boston party—"

"There, that will do. Drop it right there," ejaculated Dick with a quick glance at Spenser. "The Bosting job will kip. Tain't that we're runnin' now. Got a little pressin' business with you officers. Ain't interruptin' you?" he asked Harry.

"No. We were about through," replied the latter, with a smile at Dick's preemphatic manner.

"When does that little affair come up?"

"What little affair?" asked Harry, in surprise.

"You oughter know, as long as its your job—that little trial bizness."

"Oh! my trial? Now, I was ridiculous enough to fancy that a matter of some importance."

"Yes; folks will be ridicul'ous," was Dick's cool reply. "Tain't much 'longside some jobs I'm runnin'."

"That trifling affair will take place to-morrow," confessed Harry.

"The blazes it will!" was Dick's energetic answer. "That won't do, no how. Can't you boost her over? Slide her on a few days more? Spect to have some witnesses for you, but ain't got them ready yet."

"It might be done," returned Harry, smiling. "The courts will not stand long over so small a matter."

"Do your purtiest," demanded Dick, positively. "You'll find I ain't in fun. I've got the trumps in my hand to save you from Cherry Hill; but they ain't quite ready to play yet."

"I shall do my best, then, Dick."

"All right. Got through your business here?"

"I think so."

"Spose then you vamoos the ranche. I don't like to be imperlite, but I've got some very private words for these gentlemen's ears."

"Very well, Dick," and Harry laughed approvingly. "It is always better to be asked out than to be kicked out."

"Don't know 'bout that. Been asked out of places myself in a way that was ten degrees worse than a kick."

As soon as the door closed Dick turned to the officers, who had been much amused by this conversation.

"Now let's hear 'bout Bosting," he said. " Didn't want Harry Spenser to hear it."

"Boston is all right," answered Jack. "Mrs. Milton has been found; and what is more, she is here now, and excessively anxious to have an interview with you."

"That's the way with wimmen; they're too cur'us. Why couldn't she stay in Bosting till she was sent for?"

"Suppose you were lost, Dick, and your mother was seeking for you. Do you think she could rest quiet and wait our slow movements?"

"I feared she'd say it was a mighty good riddance," answered Dick, with a grimace. "My good p'nts ain't never appreciated."

Hogan laughed heartily at Dick's answer.

"That is so," he added; "and now how about that business?"

"Wait till we git through with Bosting; one roast tater at a time is 'nough. Jist tell Mrs. Milton that I ain't visible yit. An' tell her, if she wants to amuse herself waitin', she might tend the trial of one Harry Spenser for counterfeitin'. Tell her to keep her eyes open and see if she reckernises anybody in the court."

"All right," said Jack.

"And now to biz."

He helped himself to a chair beside the officer's table, and deliberately drew several papers from his pocket, which he spread out upon the table.

"Look at that, Ned Hogan. Ever see it afore?"

It was the torn envelope of a letter he pushed edward Hogan.

"Wny, it is addressed to me," cried the latter, in surprise.

"That's so. Know the writin'?"

"It is familiar. Yes, it is the envelope of the letter I received from Chester, telling me that Harry Spenser would go there the next day, and have a conference with a red-haired man. This was the first hint of his being connected with the counterfeiteers. The letter put me on his track."

"And the envelope put me on a better track. It was a sharp game they played to send him on a fool's errand to Chester, and you after him; and while he was gone old Sol Sly, of South street, stuffed a pack of counterfeits in his drawers. You see, I twig the whole game."

The officers looked at each other, with the light of a dawning intelligence in their eyes.

"And how about the medal that you say Sol stole?" asked Will.

"Got it here," responded Dick, tapping his pocket. "Worked a little traverse on them."

"Spenser had a long conference with the red-haired man at Chester," Hogan declared.

"Know all about that," interrupted Dick.

"T weren't counterfeitin'. Tell you sometime, what 'twas about."

"Very well. Come back to the envelope, then."

"You folks oughter be good judges of writin'. Put that and that together, and see what you make of them."

He pushed an open letter beside the envelope.

The officers bent closely over them for a minute.

"They are undoubtedly the same handwriting," declared Jack, in a positive manner. "There is attempt at disguise here."

"There was in the letter, though," said Dick. "S'pose he thought nobody's save an old envelope. Didn't know Dick Darling was 'bout."

"Go on, Dick. This is getting interesting."

"Got a little story to tell you," and Dick, spread himself before the three curious officers.

"You see I know Harry Spenser, and when I seed that letter tryin' to git him snatched, I bet myself it was writ by one of the gang—

"I did," he said. "I got it off the wall of a stationery store in Chestnut street, a day or two afore, when a stranger come in to order some paper. He took some envelopes with him that had a curious water mark. I know they talked a good deal 'bout it, and he wanted the paper of the same kind. Jist hold that envelope ag'in the light."

"I see," said Jack: "an eagle with a serpent in its claws."

"Precise! Wonder if I won't turn out the eagle and him the snake. When Ned Hogan got the letter, I seed that the envelope looked like the same; so I jist looked through it and twigged the eagle and snake."

"And what followed?"

"I did—I followed to the stationery store, and followed him off with the paper. He shook me, but I got on a lay that pulled me through. I 'oud he were a friend of Sol Sly, and that he were after the same gal with Harry Spenser. And I knowed that jealousy was a reglar tiger. Been to the theater, and seen Othello."

"And there got your education in jealousy," suggested Jack, with a laugh.

"Got some pints," retorted Dick, in a dignified tone. "Well, I got you to write to that gentleman and 'point a interview. Only wanted his handwriting. That's it."

"He's a lawyer at Fourth and Walnut. And that ain't all. He's head cook of these counterfeiteers, or else I'm the cheapest sold Jack that ever went off for a penny."

"You haven't told all you know?"

"Not by a jug full. I'm only waitin' to nail Andy Williamson so tight that the law can't drag him through. I know the headquarters of the gang is at Chester. I know he got a package of notes by express from Chester, which he set adrift on the market. And, finerly, I know jist where the queer stuff is manufactured, and I'm only waitin' for the king bee to get in the hive afore I snatch the whole caboodle!"

Dick had risen to his feet as he approached this climax, and his last sentence was given with a grandiloquent eloquence that had shamed the best of curb-stone orators.

"Well, if this is true," cried Hogan, with excited energy, "I'll be hanged if the boy isn't worth a dozen of us old stagers!"

"True! Got any doubt of it?" asked Dick, appealing to the government officers.

"As you tell it, Dick, I feel as if you are indeed on the track," declared Jack Bounce.

"I'm on it so sound that a dozen locomotives couldn't knock me off. That's what I want till Williamson goes to Chester, and then spring the trap on the whole gang. And I want you three folks, and about half-a-dozen more, to take a hand in it. Best bring a few bullets, and a trifle of gunpowder too. It'll maybe be hot work."



CHANGED.

BY HARRIET MABEL SPALDING.

Upon the silver lake we sailed,  
Touched with the flush of golden noon,  
While sweetest roses lay unvalued  
Beneath the glowing smiles of June.

How fond is memory to-night!  
Again I see you as of old,  
Dressed in beauty, radiance bright,  
Fair brow engarlanded with gold.

Clasped hands that o'er the liles lay  
Folded in musings, pure and sweet;  
While, torn in careless sport and gay,  
Were the crushed liles at your feet.

'Tis past! 'tis past! No more your smiles  
Shall wake the throbings sweet of yore,  
For one has won with winning wiles  
The heart that beats for me no more!

Now, where the sunlight gilds the lands,  
I see a barque go floating by,  
And in the fair and girlish hands  
The careless water-lilies lie.

How gleams the sunlight on the shore,  
As on that fair and golden noon,  
With life and beauty beaming o'er,  
The glory of the dreamy June!

And, fading down the shore lake,  
The flowers, barren weeds, from view;  
While gently now the shadows break,  
As o'er the once-loved scene I knew.

And musing thus, I stand and wait  
Until the pensive scene is o'er,  
And watch the timid sunbeams melt  
Upon the hazy, dreaming shore.

A Mother's Reward.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

Of all days that had come in balmy sunshines and fresh breezes during that lovely autumn weather there had been none fairer than the one Mrs. Pontifex had chosen for her fete, and as she stood in the door of the gay marquee from which flags were flying, and looked out on the wide expanse of velvet, tree-dotted lawn, where merry picturesques groups were playing croquet, where other groups were sauntering under the leafy foliage that spread so coolly and wide; where she could see fountains playing and statuary gleaming, and fairies-like children dashing and romping along in their white dresses and bright sashes, Mrs. Pontifex congratulated herself on the day, the scene, and the general grand success of her entertainment.

She was still standing there—a large, handsome woman of thirty-five, looking almost regal in her black satin trailing dress, when Miss Rutherford sailed up to her—a tall, haughty girl, in azaela-colored lawn.

"Dear Mrs. Pontifex, please do send some of the servants to drive a couple of boys off the grounds—horrid, dirty Italian boys, with violins." Mrs. Pontifex raised her eyebrows in quiet, awful dignity.

"Straggling musicians inside the gates! I do not see where Hawkins could have been to have permitted it. Where is Alice, Miss Rutherford—have you seen her?"

For Alice Pontifex was the one daughter—the only child and sole heiress to the family—a pretty, blue-eyed, fair-haired girl of seven, for whom the juvenile portion of the croquet fete had been considerably invited.

"Alice? Yes, I saw her with Bertie Carleton and Hattie May going toward those dirty little beggars. That is one reason why I came to speak to you, Mrs. Pontifex."

And, sure enough, when Mrs. Pontifex reached the designated spot—a beautifully picturesques place on the margin of a small rippling lakelet, shaded by lofty, well-trimmed elms, and with a turf sword thick cut emerald velvet—sure enough, there among the daintily-dressed, haughty-headed youngsters, headed by Alice Pontifex, radiant in emroidered muslin and pale blue silk sash, with her long lustrous hair tied with blue ribbon and flowing below her waist in a rippling, half-curling mass of fairest gold, with her dainty pale blue silk sash, and low, graceful slippers—there, so near to Mrs. Pontifex's sacredly-guarded treasure that they might have touched her, were two Italian boys, perhaps fourteen or fifteen years of age—slim, gaunt boys, with clear olive complexions, and shining, lustrous, curling hair as ebony as a raven's wing, and eyes of melting, exquisite darkness and seriousness.

Boys with a look on their faces and in their eyes that showed how cruelly ill fate had been, and was, to them—expressions of countenance that told of fatigue and hunger, gestures of their fragile figures that bespoke weakness and weary discouragement; clothes that told their poverty.

Mrs. Pontifex's haughty, almost insolent tones, arrested the preliminary tuning of their violins.

"We don't want any of your music here. Leave the grounds at once, or I will have you arrested as vagrants."

The elder of the two made a low bow in the very face of the lady's displeasure.

"The signora will let us play a little—we want bread—no money—only one little crumb of bread and a drop of water—"

"I told you to be off. Alice, darling, yonder goes Hawkins—run tell him to come here."

The boy turned wistfully toward the child.

"Leetie signorina—only a piece of—"

"How dare you speak to that child?"

His dark eyes flashed then, and he turned toward his companion.

"Come, Otto—come. There is no pity here; we are starving; we must get food somehow. Come, Lady, we mean no harm."

"Of course not—of course not! Nevertheless, as suspicious characters I feel it my duty to hand you over to the police. Hawkins, these boys evidently came in to steal, but fortunately there has been no opportunity."

The younger boy clasped his thin, trembling hands entreatingly.

"No! no! We never steal—never in our life! Carlo play, and I play and sing for money for bread—we never, never steal!"

Alice looked amusedly at him, then turned to her mother with a disgusted, cruel look on her pretty young face.

"Mamma, he's going to cry! The idea of a boy crying! The nasty, dirty crybaby! He was going to steal—and the big one, too, I know, for I saw him looking at my chain and sash-pin!"

Hawkins had them collared by this time, the smaller of the two writhing in the strong grasp, and imploring his liberty, protesting his innocence and bewailing his fate in a breath; while the elder, with a flush almost of defiance from his black eyes, haughtily submitted to the indignity.

So they were led away, while Mrs. Pontifex and Miss Rutherford exchanged their indignant views of the affair, and little Alice's silvery laughter chimed in derision and cruel delight.

"Carl Leonti! What a romantic name! And Ethel says he is far handsomer than his name is odd pretty."

Alice Pontifex threw back her golden-haired head—a pretty, graceful trick she had—and looked eagerly, interestedly at her mother.

"Yes," said Mrs. Pontifex—still almost as stately, handsome a woman at forty-six, as when we saw her last at thirty-five; "yes, Mr. Leonti is decidedly the rage, and as dear Ethel says, remarkably handsome. It is established beyond doubt or gainsay that he is independently wealthy, and people do say he is a direct descendant of an Italian nobleman. I feel it quite the mode to have him at our soirees; and, besides, he is a perfectly divine musician—equally at home on the piano and violin or organ."

Alice Pontifex had grown into a beautiful girl—that is, beautiful as an exquisite rose-leaved complexion, shiny blue eyes, and vivid gold hair; good style and handsome toilettes could make her. But she had been spoiled and petted and indulged, until it had come to pass that she never was happy unless in a whirl of mate extremes, or in the enjoyment of her wildest caprices.

And just now, fortunately, her present calling suited her mother, and Carl Leonti was all the rage in the Pontifex family, as well as in many others; and Alice Pontifex went on from admiration to adoration; and before she had long been under the influence of Carl Leonti's handsome, passionate eyes, where subduced fires burned, she had given him all her heart.

Mr. Carl Leonti took up an exquisite little bouquet of flowers—great double white violets, and blush-hearted rosebuds, almond-scented oleander-buds, and sprays of lemon-geraniums, and his handsome eyes lighted and his mustache moved in a smile as he read the card attached by a white silk cord—a card that bore the name of Miss Alice Pontifex.

"I wonder if she has such a good memory as I have? I wonder if she remembers the day, eleven years ago, when she helped to send my brother Otto and I to the disgrace that killed him! I remember it well, and here to date, Miss Alice is chieftest among the crowd that pour their adulation on me, the child of fame and fortune!"

He leaned his handsome head on his hand, his black eyes looking with calm thoughtfulness at the exquisite little offering sent by beauty's own hand.

Then he suddenly threw it on the floor, and in another second would have trampled on it in the violence of the impulse that seized him. Instead, he smiled and pinned a rosebud and a violet from it, to his coat, but the smile was cold as ice, motionless as if caused by electricity on the face of a dead man.

"Mamma!" Alice Pontifex's voice was unusually positive and decided—authoritative though it usually was.

Her mother looked up from a novel she was enjoying in the luxury of a robe-de-chambre, on the spring lounge of her dressing-room.

"It's about—Mr. Leonti I want to speak. It's about—He comes and comes, and pays me such positive attentions, and wears my flowers, and never waltzes with any one but me—and yet, mamma, he says nothing."

There were decided woe and misery in the girl's voice—misery of woo that was sufficient evidence of how deeply this handsome olive-skinned fellow had interested her. Mrs. Pontifex looked interestedly at her idol.

"I cannot see what the reason is that he does not propose. He certainly admires you, for I have seen as much myself. As you say, he has been exclusive in his attentions to you, and I've really no doubt that many people consider you engaged secretly. There can possibly be but one reason for his delay, my dear—and I rather admire him for it. He feels suitably the difference between your position and his own—you the daughter of the Pontifixes, and he—handsome enough, fascinating, rich enough, but after all, only a popular tenor tenor and musician."

Mrs. Pontifex softly smoothed down the bands of blue velvet on her white alpaca dressing-gown, and looked really very contented and self-satisfied—much more so than Alice, whose blue eyes were shining, and on whose cheeks the warm red glow was fluttering.

"Mamma, do you think that is the reason he has not spoken? Oh, mamma, if Carl Leonti does not tell me he loves me, if he does not ask me to be his wife, I shall die! I believe I would quicker kill myself and him, than have him not care for me. Mamma, I love him so!"

Mrs. Pontifex looked entreatingly at her daughter.

"Alice, my darling! you must not talk so! Mr. Leonti surely knows that it is almost a duty for him to aspire to your hand; but, my dear—it shall be arranged for you. All great families have the privilege of arranging such affairs when the daughter is to be wooed—noblesse oblige, you know."

And so it happened, that one morning after one evening when Carl Leonti had been unusually tender and devoted to pretty Alice, and his dark eyes had looked things unutterable in hers, until the girl's heart had throbbed fast and fierce in exquisite delight and anticipation—so it happened the morning after that special evening, that the grand Pontifex barouche was drawn up in stately array in front of Carl Leonti's door in glitter of gold harness and shine of glossy-coated horses and bravery of liveried servants. While inside, Mrs. Pontifex, the representative of one of the "greatest families" in Gotham, talked with Carl Leonti and offered him her daughter, with all the pomp and pride and dignity she could command.

And Leonti stood courteously listening, his handsome face grave and respectful, his soft, beautiful eyes looking unflinchingly in her self-satisfied face as she stated to him her admiration for his reticence on the subject, considering the position of the family into which it was esteemed such an honor to go—into which he was asked to go.

And when she had said her graceful say, and sat awaiting her answer, with the air of a sovereign who knows that she has but to express her opinions to have them religiously, promptly, delightedly obeyed—when she sat there, in her royal attitude of half-consideration, half-waiting triumph, with her daughter Alice, the fairest and haughtiest of the land, an offering at this man's feet—then Carl Leonti knew what full glory and excellence there was in his patient plan; and his low-voiced, almost careless words had in them such a ring of glad revenge that it startled himself.

I should doubtless express my great appreciation of the favor extended me, Mrs. Pontifex. Perhaps if I had any intention of accepting it—

She rose to her feet suddenly, her face blanching.

"If you had any intention of accepting it! Pardon me. Do I understand you?"

He smiled at her coolly.

"It may be better for me to assure you that I decline the honor of your daughter's hand. I presume that is perfectly plain?"

"Decline my daughter's hand! Mr. Leonti! What do you mean by this dreadful insult? Decline my daughter's hand!! What have you meant, then, by your exclusive devotion to her?"

She was almost choking with frenzy. Leonti was cool and calm, with that smile on his face that had been there when he most trampled Alice Pontifex's flowers beneath his heel.

"Alice Pontifex is reaping the reward of the early education of cold, suspicious hauteur and tyrannical cruelty which her mother inculcated, and which has ruined both their lives.

THE FAIRIES.

Where are the wonderful elves and the fairy creatures bright? Where are the tiny things that danced in the pale moonlight? Danced in a magic ring and fluttered in robes of white, Like flowers in the sunbeam whirled, like leaves in the forest roar. Hark to the sound of the sea, and the cry of the waves on the shore.

Where are the dusky gnomes who toiled in the golden ground? So that the miners trembled hearing their hammer sound, Hearing them tapping, tapping, delving in darkness bound. A thousand tapping hammers beneath them hammering. Hark to the muted thunder, the voice of the hidden spring.

Where are the forest fairies, the elves in Lincoln green, Deep in the forest hidden, and never in cities seen, Sought for by timid maidens on sainted Holloween?

The joy of true lovers, a merry band were they, Hark to the hum of the bee, in the scented blossoms of May.

Where are the household fairies, who loved the embers glow, Who play at games with the shadows flickering and fro, But left no track on the sanded floor, no trace on the fallen snow, But filled up the little slippers the children left behind.

Hark to the howl of the tempest, the moan of the stormy wind.

The elves are waiting, waiting, for the golden days to come, When grief shall be known no longer, nor faithful love be dumb; Till the figures all are added up, and finished the minstrelsy. Ah, yes, they are waiting, waiting, till grief shall be no more.

Hark to the rustle of raindrops, that kiss the deserted shore.

The Bouquet Girl;

OR,

HALF A MILLION DOLLARS.

BY AGILE PENNE, AUTHOR OF "ORPHAN NELL," "STRANGE STORIES OF MANY LANDS," "THE DETECTIVE'S WARD," "WOLF OF ENHOVEN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXECUTORS.

CAPTAIN JACK'S office was situated in the fourth story of one of the handsomest buildings on lower Broadway; rather high if one ascended by the stairs, but then in this age of luxuries, no one thinks of climbing heavenward in that manner when the "elevators" afford such a ready means of access to the upper chambers.

The sanctum of the lawyer was fitted up in the most luxuriant manner; the "Modoc" of the bar believed in style and show, for all of which he had paid, of course.

On the morning after the night when his recognition by the actor had excited so much astonishment in the breast of the latter, the lawyer sat in his comfortable easy-chair enjoying a fragrant cigar, and glancing at the morning journal, which he held in his hand, every now and then.

The daintily-ornamented clock upon the wall chimed ten in its silver tones. The lawyer tossed the paper upon the table and looked expectantly at the door.

"That's the hour," he murmured, "and they are generally very punctual. I think that I have engineered this affair pretty well," and he rubbed his soft, white palms together in a manner that plainly evinced great satisfaction.

"And to think, too, that it all proceeded from my indulging in a few more glasses of champagne than is usual with me! If it had not been for the wine the idea would never have entered my head. It's a bold scheme, but boldness always suits me," and he smiled complacently as he surveyed his dashy, handsome face in the glass. "Taxwill I am pretty sure of, and as for Dodson, he hates trouble and will be apt to agree with us in everything. I have examined the matter thoroughly, and I can't see a weak spot."

The lawyer's agreeable meditations were interrupted by the entrance into the office of a fat, middle-aged gentleman. He was short and stout, English evidently by the "cut of his jib," as a nautical man would say, and dressed in plain, old-fashioned garments.

With his fat, honest face, puffy cheeks and aldermanic stomach, he exactly resembled the "John Bull" of the artists who "do" the cartoons for the illustrated journals.

This was Mr. Peter Dodson, formerly chief-cook of old Vendotena's confectionery establishment.

"On time, eh!" exclaimed the easy-going Englishman, glancing at the clock.

"Oh, yes, right to the minute; hot, isn't it?"

"Hot? by Jove, sir, it is! We never have it like this at 'ome, you know."

Like nearly all his tribe, this burly Briton was always talking about 'ome, although he never manifested any intention of going there.

"Try a glass of wine," suggested Captain Jack, producing a bottle of Chateau Lafitte from a handsome sideboard, upon the top of which a pitcher of ice-water and some crystal goblets were standing.

"Thank'e; don't care if I do," and the Englishman smacked his lips as his hand caressed the bottle. Dear this son of Britain loved the creature comforts of this life.

And as Mr. Dodson proceeded to enjoy the contents of the goblet another gentleman bustled into the room—a tall, thin man, well ad-

vanced in years, dressed in the height of fashion, but showing plainly by his manner that he was no slave to luxuriant ease; in fact, a practiced medical eye would have detected at a glance that the man was terribly overworked—that his whole nervous system was shattered, and that nothing was more likely than that this driving man of business might be stricken down at any moment by the grim hand of Death, despite the brisk promise of life that his nervous, energetic manner inspired.

This was Mortimer Taxwill, esquire, well known in Wall street as a heavy operator in stocks, and reputed to be worth a great deal of money.

Dodson and Taxwill were the executors of the will of the old confectioner, Lorenzo Vendotena, and Captain Jack was the lawyer who had drawn the will.

The old confectioner's illness had been a short one, but he had been fully conscious that he was coming nearer and nearer to the end each day, and so he had prepared his will.

The lonely old man in his last moments had relented somewhat; he had neither kith nor kin in the world, with the exception of his son and that son's daughter. When the Jersey lawyer, Limowell, had discovered that the mother was dead, he had waited upon old Vendotena with the news, and had informed him that the child was safe and in his hands.

The

## CHAPTER XIII.

FRANK'S STORY.

"A HALF a million of dollars!" Craigie exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Yes; it is a large sum, isn't it?"

"Well, I should say so, but I don't understand!" the bewildered actor protested.

"You know that gentleman is a lawyer?"

"Yes; and not a very reputable one, either."

"He met me at Fulton Ferry the other night; he had been drinking, and I suppose the liquor put the idea into his head, for he asked my name, how old I was, and then told me that I was the heir to a fortune of half a million of dollars."

"You had better be on your guard, Frank," Craigie said, seriously. "This fellow is totally unscrupulous. He has already been concerned in some ugly scrapes, and how he manages to escape from being 'thrown over the bars,' as the lawyers say, which means expulsion from the legal fraternity, is a mystery."

"Oh, he intends to pay himself well for the services which he is to perform; he does not serve me for nothing; he is honest about it. He came to-night especially to hear the story of my life, and after I had told him all I knew in regard to my birth and early childhood, he said that in his mind there was no doubt that I was the long-lost heir."

"Long-lost heir!" Craigie exclaimed. "Yes, that is the way the story-writers always put it. But how did the man happen to think that you were the heir? That is something I don't understand."

"He has a picture of my mother, and recognized me from my resemblance to it."

Craigie was puzzled; he distrusted the wily Captain Jack, and suspected that there was some deep-laid plan at the bottom of all this. Fortunes of half a million did not usually wait long for heirs."

"The fellow is a regular rascal, I am sure; I have heard of two or three of his tricks, and I am afraid that there is more in this than appears on the surface."

"Oh, no; I think not," replied the girl. "He has made a good bargain for himself, and will profit more than I will if he succeeds in getting the money."

"What is he to receive for his valuable services?"

"One half."

"A quarter of a million, eh?"

"Yes; and out of my half are to come all the expenses."

"He will be paid pretty well; but it is not so bad, considering that without him you would not be, probably, able to get anything."

"Yes; he is to find all the necessary proofs."

"But can he prove that you are the heir?"

"He says he can."

"But are you the heir? Do you think you are?"

"Well, I don't know what to think," the girl answered. "I'll tell you the story, and you can decide. The half a million is the fortune left by an old gentleman, Vendotene by name, who used to keep a confectionery store on Broadway."

"Yes, I know the place; many a dish of ice-cream I've had there."

"The son of the old gentleman—an only son—secretly married a young country girl at Long Branch, and the father never forgave him. The wife was named Decetra Limowell, and about two years after her marriage she died, leaving a baby girl. That child was brought up by this Limowell, who was a lawyer. When the old gentleman died, about eighteen years after the marriage of his son, he made a will leaving all his property to his grand-daughter, Francesca, the child of Decetra. This Mr. Leifert was the lawyer who drew out the will. He went in search of the child, now a girl of eighteen, but could find no trace of her at all, or of Mr. Limowell, who had taken care of her. He had lived at Long Branch, or, to speak more correctly, near Long Branch, in a very lonely spot, and had gone away, no one knew where or when. That's the story of the heir, now hear mine. I don't know who my father or mother was, or anything about them. Ever since I can remember I lived with a Mr. Limowell in a lonely house near Long Branch. I was told that my name was Francesca, but whenever I asked about my father and mother, I was told that they were both dead, long ago, and that I mustn't ask any questions. Mr. Limowell was a harsh, stern man, so ugly in temper that I fairly grew to hate the very sight of him. About a year ago he brought a young man to the house, introduced him to me, and said that he was to be my husband. That very night I ran away and came to New York. Brown Betty, an old colored woman who took care of the house and had always looked out for me since I was a child, advised me to take the step. I had twenty-five dollars which I had saved up, and I knew that would keep me until I found something to do. Brown Betty knew Mrs. O'Hoolihan and sent me here. Now compare the two stories; have I not reason to believe that I am the missing heir for whom this fortune of half a million of dollars waits?"

Craigie was thoroughly astonished. It was more than probable, and his quick mind speedily comprehended how easily a skillful lawyer, particularly one not over scrupulous, could supply the missing links in the chain of evidence.

"Well, it certainly does look as if you were the heir."

"Am I not justified, then, in accepting the fortune that chance throws into my lap?"

"Most certainly! It would be tempting Providence to refuse."

"And think, too, of the happiness that such a vast sum of money will bring me."

"Money does not always bring happiness, you know."

"Ah, yes, but it does if it is rightly used," the girl cried, eagerly. "It won't turn my head; either, although I have been used to poverty all my life."

"That's good."

"And I shall be able to pay the debts I owe."

"Do you owe many?"

"Oh, no; you are my greatest creditor," and the pretty girl rested her little hand upon the arm of the young man and looked him full in the face with her great dark eyes, now moistened with emotion.

"Why, what do you owe me?"

"Everything!" the girl exclaimed, impulsively; "haven't you tried to educate me—to teach me how to avoid danger in the narrow lane of life which fate forced me to tread? Do you think that I shall ever forget your kindness? Oh, no! Why, my first thought, Ronald, when I was told that I was the heir to all this money, was that I should be able to repay you!"

"And how do you intend to repay me?" the actor asked, smiling at the eager, upturned face.

"Oh, I don't know! You must tell me. You don't like the stage; I have heard you

say so a hundred times, and now you will be able to leave it."

"I don't exactly see how you manage to figure that out," Craigie observed, laughing.

"I haven't come in for a fortune of half a million," you know."

"You have always been ready to help me when I needed help," she replied, "and now, when I get this money, I shall consider it as much yours as mine."

A moment the young actor gazed earnestly into the expressive face, the dusk of the night partly concealing the blushes which flooded throat, cheeks and temples, and then, with a gentle motion, he extended his arms and drew the young girl gently to his manly breast.

"Why, little one," he said, "do you think that I am the sort of man to take any unfair advantage? Just think of the prospect that lies before you. A half a million of dollars!"

Why, with such a sum of money as that you can buy your way into the best society in the country. Few circles in this great republic so select as to ask 'Who or what is she?' No;

the question generally put is, 'How much is she worth?' Gold is the touch-stone which tries all mankind. I am a poor man, something of a scholar, but, like a fool, I have chosen a profession, the pursuit of which brings no honor. In the eyes of two-thirds of the world, the actor is still a vagabond, just as he used to be considered legally, in the old English time, when the stocks and the whipping-post awaited him if he chance to merit the displeasure of some petty official. You will be a rich young lady, an heiress; do you think that I, really an outcast from the charmed circle called society, would try to hamper you by recalling to your memory the old days when we were both together? Oh, no, Frank; I am no such man. Accept the gift that fortune gives and forget that I live."

"Bless you, my children!" cried a hoarse voice, in foreign accents; "I, your father, bless you!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 837.)

## HOPE

BY HARRIET ESTHER WARD.

Standing alone on the ocean shore.

Looking afar o'er the trackless tide,  
Deaf to the sound of the waves roar,  
Is winsome Jennie, the fisherman's bride!

Watching the ships with their snowy wings,  
And the sun with his golden beams on the sea,  
And wondering asks, "Which shallow brings

My husband, my darling again to me?"

Yet no shallow, with white wings spread,

Entered the harbor; but each passed by;

And she watched till the golden sun grew red,

And bathed in purple the western sky.

The sails all vanished like phantoms white,

And the fisherman, and the gaffer pale;

And she turned from the shore, where the waters bright

Sung over and over their mournful tune.

Perhaps a tear for a moment dimmed

The dark brown eyes of the waiting bride;

But a youth's glad hours hope is undimmed,

And she said, "He will come with to-morrow's tide."

And she traced the sands that the waves had

kissed.

To the cot that nestled near to the shore,

With only the thought that to-day had missed

The joy that comes held in store.

Ah! how many hope, and, hoping, wait

On the shimmering sands of life's great shore,

Waiting in vain for the hand of fate.

To own their hopes are the day is o'er!

Though the sun goes down and the night looms dark.

And only wrecks are strewn at their feet,

Yet hope returns, like the dove to the ark,

And brings to the waiting the faith so sweet.

Ol! perfect and pure is the flower of Hope!

But the flower of Hope is not always may,

Though it binds to bloom on its own grey slope,

It bursts in full glory on the downward way;

And Hope will shine through sorrows pale.

Encompass it round; and a Niope's tears

Cannot never drown in the shadowed vale

The light that was born for eternity's years.

## The Velvet Hand:

OR,

THE IRON GRIP OF INJUN DICK.

A Wild Story of the Cinnabar Mines,

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "INJUN DICK," "OVERLAND KIT,"

"ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROB," "KENTUCK

THE SPORT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AT SHERIFF'S SALE.

The morning of the day appointed for the sale of the Cinnabar mine property came bright and beautiful.

Ten o'clock was the hour set for the sale, and quite a crowd had collected around and about the premises as the time drew nigh.

Prominent among the idlers who were plainly collected out of pure curiosity, and who had no idea of investing in the property, was Joe Bowers, who was the center of a little group, as he generally contrived to be.

"Oh, I tell ye wot it is, gentlemen, I know

this hyer property from A to izard!" he declaimed with lofty accent. "I knew it in the time when this hyer town was first started.

I was one of the first pilgrims that hoofed it up this hyer valley, I was! Oh, them were lively times, you bet! I've seen more good old gold dust taken out of this hyer mine—why, gentlemen, talk 'bout yer Big Bonanzas, an' yer Consolidated Virginia, an' yer Mariposa grants—why, this hyer mine could knock the socks outen any of 'em! Oh, methinks, me old bretheren, in me mind's eye, Horatio, I seen them times ag'in!"

"Get out!" cried an irreverent bystander,

"this hyer mine is a fraud, anyway!" I reckon that I've heerd all 'bout it. It's bu'st ed every party that has took hold on it!"

"That's so, me noble dook; to the p'int you talk, and straight, by jingo! but it's a buly min' for all that! You don't understand; that's a spell on it!" and Mr. Bowers sunk his voice to a sort of mysterious whisper as he made this wonderful announcement.

"A what?" cried Yuba Bill, who was in the crowd.

"A spell—a charm, gentle William!" responded the bummer.

"Oh, give us a rest!" ejaculated the tall son of Yuba.

"It's a sure enuff fact!" cried Bowers.

"Don't I know it, an' don't I say it; an' wlar,

oh, whar on this hyer foot-stool is the man wot

says that I, Joe Bowers, kin lie? Thar's blood

on this mine, fell'er-citizens! I see'd the fight

when good men an' true went down like sheep

with the rot; an' the bad spell that's on the place will never be worked off till Injun Dick Talbot comes to his own ag'in."

The name of Injun Dick was tolerably familiar to most of the crowd, and nearly all had heard some account of his connection with the settling of the town of Cinnabar; but some of the bystanders were ignorant of the man and his doings, and one of them, happening to ask for information in regard to Injun Dick, af-

firmed the bummer, who was never so happy as when spinning some outrageous yarn, a chance to go into a long story about Injun Dick Talbot and his wonderful adventures.

Of course the veteran did not trouble himself in regard to facts, but he just "waded in," as Yuba would have remarked, and told one of the toughest yarns that mortal man ever listened to.

A few minutes before ten the sheriff, Shepard Blum, arrived upon the ground. Blum, as the reader of Injun Dick will probably remember, was formerly chief of police, but at the last election had succeeded in getting in as sheriff.

With Blum came the superintendent of the mine, Bertrand Redan.

The good folks of Cinnabar had been on the lookout ever since the affray between the Cinnabar superintendent and Velvet Hand for a first-class "shooting-match." The gossips of the town, after hearing of the discomfiture of Redan at the hands of the agile and strong-armed Velvet Hand, had looked to see Redan arm himself and assault the card-player on the first favorable occasion. But Redan had manifested no idea of doing anything of the sort, and when questioned in regard to the matter—some anxious souls could not restrain their curiosity—had simply said that he was a fool to allow himself to be drawn into a quarrel at all, and that, as far as he was concerned, he should pay no further attention to the matter.

This was "taking sides" with a vengeance. Cinnabar was woefully disappointed, and the character of the superintendent suffered accordingly. As Joe Bowers had remarked, "Things wasn't now as they used to be." Civilization had come and the glories of the old-time Cinnabar City were on the wane.

The hour of ten arrived.

Blum mounted a box, and unfolding a legal-looking paper proceeded to read the terms of the sale.

"The Cinnabar mine, machinery, buildings, tools, etc., to be sold to the highest bidder, ten per cent. of the purchase-money to be paid when the property was knocked down, forty per cent. more in thirty days, and the residue in one year from date."

And just as Blum commenced to read the terms of the auction Velvet Hand, accompanied by Clint MacAlpine, the mayor of the town, joined the throng.

As the two came up and the velvet suit of the Cinn

salve to his conscience as sharing it with her might be!

About this time one of those circumstances occurred which, trifling in themselves, are yet of great importance when fitted into a mosaic of evidence; and are sometimes startling in the appearance which they have of being ordered by a special Providence.

One dull December day I was sitting in my office, about as miserable and unoccupied as a man can be, when I was aroused from my reverie by the sight of a span of runaway horses dashing down the street, dragging a light sleigh or cutter in which were two gentlemen. I just had time to observe the danger, when they ran against another stouter vehicle, and their eggshell conveyance was crushed into twenty pieces, the occupants were thrown out, and the mad-damned horses, on hearing the roar and fragments on the way. One of the gentlemen took in a pile of snow, which had been showered from the walk, and was not at all hurt; the other less fortunate, was thrown against a lamp-post, and so badly bruised that he was insensible when taken up. He was carried into my office and laid on my threadbare sofa. His head was bleeding from the blow which had stunned him, but he was not otherwise much injured, and I was enabled to assure his alarmed friend that the consequences would not be serious. By the application of stimulants he soon revived, when the crowd dispersed, and his companion leaving him with his still further recover, went to look after the horses. I was given some time. Meanwhile my patient lay comfortably on the sofa, bearing his misfortune like a philosopher. We talked together, when he began to feel like it, and I saw, what I had before conjectured from his features and dress, that he was a Cuban. He was wrapped, almost to his eyes, in rich furs, and his dress was elegant and foppish. He was young and fine-looking, with the yellow complexion, fine silken mustache, and glittering eyes of his countrymen; jewels sparkled in his wristbands and on his slender hands; he gleamed about his poor room, half宏明, half drawing a contrast between myself and myself—for he seemed to accord me all the respect I could demand, and to be interested in my conversation.

In the midst of our chat, I drew my handkerchief from my pocket. Something came with it, and fell, ringing, upon the floor. It was the silver key! I hastily picked it up, but before I could return it to its receptacle the stranger's hand was outstretched.

"I beg your pardon; may I look at that?"

Handing it to him, he turned it over, looked at the date and lettering, and remarked:

"It is a curious key; may I ask where you got it?"

"I had had its question in the shape most difficult to answer."

"It belonged to a friend of mine," I said, "without a hesitation which he must have noted, 'why do you ask?'"

"I did not know there were two such in existence. My uncle had one precisely similar to this, which had been in his family since they came from Spain. It belonged to a box, made of mahogany, banded with iron, with steel rivets, in which he, and his father before him, kept their money and jewels. The key was manufactured by a locksmith in Madrid especially for that box; yet here is another so much like it I could almost swear the two were one."

"Perhaps they are," I said, "or could that not be?"

"Really, I do not know. My uncle lost his fortune two years ago by mercantile speculations into which he entered. Being very proud, he took his losses much to heart, finally emigrating to California in the hope of retrieving them. I have not heard what his success has been—I should think he might do well there; but the sight of this key makes me uneasy. I have neglected him too long. I shall write, as soon as I get to my hotel, ask him to forgive my remissness, and then to bring him to me occasionally. But you have not told me the friend's name who owned this. Perhaps it was my uncle. Have you been in California?"

"No. And this key was given to me by an American lady. I think she had it from a gentleman who is now dead—a doctor who had returned from California but a short time before."

"Ha!" ejaculated the young Cuban, deeply interested.

He remained thinking for a moment, if I told him that his uncle was dead, his cousin married and a widow, he would at once demand her place in the box, and then his uncle's right to her when he would make known the news by which he had ascertained her whereabouts, and I should no longer be safe in my new locality.

The fact that I had in my possession the key to the box would add to the strong presumptive evidence against me. My own safety demanded that I should keep silence. It must be months before, by inquiries which he might institute in that distant city on the western shore, he would be able to trace my cousin, and in those months the debt to which I had pledged myself might be attained.

"A doctor," resumed my visitor, after a pause; "that looks bad! Can it be that my uncle is dead; that this physician attended him, perhaps receiving, as his only fee, this empty box, which was once always so crowded with the riches of a proud family?"

I remained silent. He sat up, now, forgetful of his aching wound, in the interest of the subject.

"If so, I wonder what has become of Inez," he continued, more to himself than me. "She must be woman now. I used to fancy the child, little spit-fire though she was. She had so much spirit! bright eyes, too! It is a shame for our family to be disgraced like her. I hope her father has not died, and left her alone in this wicked city. It would be terrible, though, doubtless, she is married before this. She was a coquette from her cradle—little Inez was—a cunning child!" then to me: "You say the friend is dead who possessed this. Then, I cannot seek information in that quarter. I must curb my impatience until I shall hear by letter. Have you any objection to parting with the key?"

"I should not like to, unless you have a stronger claim upon it than I."

"You do not know that I have any—the least—only as a claim to my uncle's box, certainly once owned it. If you seize it, I will not ask it; but if you see the lady soon who gave it to you, pray inquire if she knows its history. I will call upon you again before I leave the city."

Here his friend returned with word that the horses had injured themselves badly, and that he had sent them to the stable, jested about the accident, and the cost of a sleigh-ride—"a noveltly," he said, "with which he was now sufficiently acquainted." It seemed they had turned off the main routes, because the sleighing was better in our quiet avenue.

"So you should obtain information which I thought you would like to receive?" I asked, as they prepared to leave.

"Call on me at the New York Hotel; I shall be there for the next four weeks. Farewell, and many thanks for your attention."

He laid his card on the table, along with a gold piece quite too large for the slight service which had been rendered; but I did not see the money until, after they had left, I raised the card.

"Don Miguel da Almeda—quite a grand name," I mused, smiling at the pompous sound as I read. "I wish this Donship had not left so much money. It looks too much like bestowings!" The words were on the tip of my tongue, of an American, who, while he laughs at titles, likes well to preserve his independence. "If he don't, why, it seems as if fate had made me a present of the means for a journey to Meredith Place."

My desire to return to Hampton was like the longing and restlessness of a fever-patient; and the first use which it occurred to me to make of the money was to spend it in a secret visit to the Place.

I did not feel quite at ease about allowing Don Miguel to go away with no tidings of his cousin. I had boasted to myself my intention of supporting Inez, if Lillian should marry. It is true that my feelings toward the young widow had changed very much since the night I had detected her in a stolen interview with Arthur Miller; I now knew her to be fickle, imprudent and selfish, if nothing worse. Still, he was young, scarcely more than a child, and never had received training to make her otherwise than what she was—the creature of every impulse. I did not mean to be too severe in my condemnation of her conduct. If this cousin of hers really felt any interest in her, it would probably be very greatly to her advantage that he should be allowed to know where she was. He was rich and liberal. It was natural to suppose that he would take her with him to her relatives in Cuba, if she would consent to go. This would much better suit her than giving lessons on the guitar. It would certainly be a hundred times better for Lillian. I knew, as well as if I could see their daily life, how Inez' petulance and complaining were upon my cousin, and that the burden of the work must rest upon her shoulders.

It would be cowardly in me to place my own convenience in the way of the interest of either of those two girls.

I was not long in making up my mind that I would call upon the Don and inform him where his cousin Inez could be found. But before taking such a step, it was evident that I must be prepared to quit my present name and locality, that I must go to the United States in the name of my flight; for Don Miguel could of course relate what means he had discovered his cousin, when it would at once be surmised who had the key of the missing box, and should be arrested in my conversation.

"It will be a month before he leaves the city," I said to myself. "In ten days it will be Christmas. I will take my holiday then. One brief visit, under cover of night and darkness, at the old place; one stolen look at Lillian's face—then, if nothing occurs to give me further hope of a specific solution of the problem, I will return, see Don Miguel on the track of his cousin, and then myself fly to some distant city, where I can go to work with a will to do something for my darling's ease and comfort. Inez will be provided for; perhaps, also, Lillian, for the Don."

Here a spasm of jealousy shook my heartstrings. The Cuban gentleman was young and attractive in every way—he could not meet Lillian without being enchanted by her! What was to be expected but that they should love one another?

If Lillian's affections were not hopelessly fixed upon Arthur, nothing, I argued, could possibly befall him, but he would be becoming interested in each other. The Cuban, I supposed, was drawn to the darker charms of the South, would be double alive to the exquisite type of my cousin's beauty; while he, so gallant, so graceful in every movement, full of pride and high spirits would appear to her as if she were one of the heroes had walked out of a poet's story to meet her.

Well, why should it not be so? This would furnish for her all that I craved for her welfare—love, protection, and wealth. Ought I not, poor as I was, resting under a cloud, to be glad to throw such a chance in her way? I had the least idea that my cousin ever thought of me except as a cousin, and a vagrant one at that. She no more guessed the passion I felt for her than that she had a lover in the moon.

I said to myself that I should like to know who she was mated with one who struck me as favorably as this young gentleman. But my heart gave the words the lie. It would make me unutterably miserable to know it. Was unutterable misery too great a sacrifice to make for her? No, it was not! I would make it, if my plan should be carried out.

Perhaps better days were in store for all but me. I can afford to smile sadly now as I look back and recall with what a brave struggle I nerved myself to send a suitor to the feet of the girl I loved—a lover to my own darling.

#### CHAPTER XI.

A HEART VAIL THROWN ASIDE.

CHRISTMAS was passing into Christmas morn as the midnight train dropped me at Hampton station. A slouched hat and thick overcoat were all the disguise needed at that lonely hour; I felt no apprehension of being recognized, even if I should encounter acquaintances. The train went roaring off into the darkness of the military walk.

The moon hung directly in the zenith; the snow lay in dazzling whiteness everywhere; it was the perfection of a winter night—calm, brilliant, cold. The station was between Hampton and Meredith Place; between the station and the latter place was the cemetery of the village. As I passed it, its white tombstones, standing solemnly in the whiter moonlight, looking so desolate as they rose out of the drifted snow, my heart urged me to go in and linger a few moments by the graves of my relatives.

"When Dr. Meredith brought home that silly creature, you alone guessed the effect it had upon me. The first few hours I was stunned by the blow. Pride enabled me to keep up appearances, but I was wretched, most wretched, for my own sake. But when I grew calm enough to look upon her, I began to grow miserable for her sake. I saw the mistake he had made—a mistake which one of his generous and unworldly nature would be sure to make under the circumstances."

She was silent, apparently lost in painful recollections.

"You have called her a silly creature, a child and a tigress!" I remarked, after a moment; "do you speak at random?"

"No, she is all three—a child in want of discipline; silly by the narrowness of her mind and smallness of her ideas; a tigress in passion, when her Southern blood is aroused."

"Then why have you permitted your brother to be so attentive to her?"

"Some things must be permitted that others may be accomplished. Oh, to think of her, alluring her wayward fancies to run after other men, when he, her benefactor and husband, lies here with the snow above him—the cold snow!"

Her last words were sobbed out, and she made a movement as if to throw herself on her grave, but restrained herself, wiped the icy drops which were freezing on her cheeks, and went on:

"Tell me, truly, Mr. Meredith, have you not reversed your decision with regard to me?—have you not been forced to conclude that I am not the guilty party?—(as if I would have to prove it!) of his head?" in an undertone to herself. "Is there not another person whose conduct really gives rise to more suspicion than mine?"

"There is," I said, after an instant's hesitation.

"Would you spare her any more than me, if she should be found guilty by you and me in our researches?"

"No, I would not," I answered, shuddering. She noticed the shiver, and seemed to think I was cold.

"I will not keep your here any longer," she said. "Possibly, too, we might be observed. How long did you expect to stay in this vicinity?"

"Only twenty-four hours."

"Will you be at Gramme's Hooker's? I ask, because I would like to see you again, to compare notes with regard to a certain person."

"I do not know. Is there a tenant now at Meredith Place?"

"Lillian told me there was none. The house is entirely empty—for the stories of its being haunted keep all intruders away. I came out to-night, after Lillian and Inez were in bed. I wished to visit this place alone. I had little thought of your being here. If you were the murderer you would fly from, instead of to, this grave."

"Perhaps—though I have heard of guilty consciences which forever urged their owners on to the lonely hollows of the deep wells where the bodies of their victims lay concealed. Miss Miller, I will not pretend a friendship which I do not wholly feel. I have been too deeply prejudiced to change my opinion suddenly; but this I will say, that I am ready to co-operate with you in any scheme to discover the cause or motive of my uncle's death, and the where-

abouts of his fortune. Has it never occurred to you that he might have been driven to suicide by unpleasant discoveries with regard to his young wife?"

"It has," she said quickly; "but the idea is always controverted by the probability that, in such a case, he would have left his dying message before he drank the fatal draught. We should have known the meaning of that mystery—True."

"We must not linger here. I will talk with you about these matters to-morrow. In the afternoon, just before tea, I will walk out to Meredith Place. Are you not going?"

"In a moment." She turned away, and I, stooping, plucked a sprig from the rose which Lillian had twined for her mother's grave. Crossing the dry, senseless leaves, I placed them in my note-book, and struck off into the woods which bordered one side of the cemetery. No leaves now on the bare and glittering branches, which swayed with melancholy and mysterious moans, above me, while the crisp snow crackled under my feet. By a circuitous route through the familiar forest, I gained Meredith Place, deserted now even by Tiger. The mansion loomed up in the bright, huge and desolate; the ivy waving from the stone tower seemed the only living thing.

I was greatly agitated as I approached it; so much had been done and suffered in that house, I could behold it again, after an absence, without emotion. I soon found which yielded to my efforts, and opening it, I entered, closed it behind me, and was alone in the shadowy, dimly-moonlighted, chilly house, which, one year ago, had been so warm and bright with love, hope, and gay young life.

Too much agitated to feel sleepy, I walked through all the familiar rooms, in which the old furniture still kept its place. The clock was stopped in the silent hall. In a freak of fancy I climbed to the face and wound it up. "If visitors should come here within the week, they will swear the place is haunted, sure enough," I thought, as I turned the key and set the pendulum to swinging.

Immediately the voice of the old clock pealed out loud and clear, ringing through the empty mansion with startling distinctness. Again, as once before—eight!

I can not describe how solemn and powerful the effect upon my excited mind. Did the time-piece always pause at that precise point, when the hands were at the top? Was this a chance coincidence? Doubtless the first; but it did not seem to me, as I stood alone in the deserted house, long bars of moonlight and black groups of shadows dividing the hall. That pale, pale peal, ringing out for my ear alone, seemed to me to ring out for my soul, too. It said—"You are sleeping—you are letting the months go by; your body is moulder in dust, my friends are forgetting me—while you rest upon your promise. Work! work! Do not grow discouraged—do not be foiled by a woman's art, nor give way to compassion, nor be deceived by one or the other, until the pledge you gave is redeemed: Remember the figure eight!"

"As if I ever thought of anything else!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 385.)

THE INDIAN'S AMBITION.—Civilization has many points of ambitious attainment—the rewards of letters, triumph in the forum and legislative hall, the diplomatic bureau, etc.—but the Indian has only one prime honor to grasp; it is triumph in the war-path, it is rushing upon his enemy, tearing the scalp reeking from his head, and then uttering his terrible war-whoop. For this crowning act he is permitted to mount the honored feather of the war eagle—the king of carnivorous birds. By this mark he is publicly known, and his hours are always watching me, nor that you laughed at me for setting me down as a woman too old to be rescued, only you could truly love, beardless boy that you were. It is never agreeable for a woman to have her love suspected before she is certain of its return; but did not you like to play the spy upon my heart. I did not like you, your antecedents, nor the promise you gave for the future. I was willing to let Lillian have opportunity to see other young men, before she became entangled with you, and I brought on my brother Arthur, and introduced her to the young society of the village, with the purpose of giving her freedom of choice. You are the worst construction on all my actions, so be it—I forgive you for it, if only you will work with me for an object in which we are both interested."

She paused again.

"It was not pleasant for me to feel that you were always watching me, nor that you laughed at me for setting me down as a woman too old to be rescued, only you could truly love, beardless boy that you were. It is never agreeable for a woman to have her love suspected before she is certain of its return; but did not you like to play the spy upon my heart. I did not like you, your antecedents, nor the promise you gave for the future. I was willing to let Lillian have opportunity to see other young men, before she became entangled with you, and I brought on my brother Arthur, and introduced her to the young society of the village, with the purpose of giving her freedom of choice. You are the worst construction on all my actions, so be it—I forgive you for it, if only you will work with me for an object in which we are both interested."

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## A SONG OF SUMMER.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

To sing of summer, glowing warm,  
My muse, lend me thy tuneful charm,  
And keep these flies off in a swain.  
Bright summer! O'er the world she weaves  
Her web of flowers and tender leaves—  
And ants go crawling up your sleeves.  
High rides the sun, which warmly glows,  
Resplendent till the daytime's close—  
And mites go swarming in your nose.  
The skies so distant seem and white;  
The far-off hills sleep in the light—  
And little midges, how they bite!  
Sweet season of the middle year!  
We dwell upon thy glories dear—  
And find a bug within our ear!  
We stop to pluck each rose we see  
That blooms upon the highway free—  
Exasperating some sly bee!  
The soul on pinions seems to float;  
The lips awake the tender note—  
You suck a fly into your throat.  
How thrills your heart in summer's track  
To see of beauteous things no lack—  
And feel a spider down your back!  
We rest beneath the shady boughs;  
Contented thoughts the time allows—  
A hornet's nest we then arouse.  
The fruit hangs pendant like a charm,  
We pluck the apple reddening warm—  
And bite into a hidden worm.  
How sweet to rise while yet the dews  
Clothe all the fields with diamond hues—  
And find a pinch-bug in your shoes!  
When e'er the evening wind is fair,  
Our forehead to its breath we bare—  
And brush the bugs out of our hair.  
The summer scenes, how sweet they lie!  
We pause to look lest they fly—  
And brush the gnats out of our eye.  
Our feelings how long to speak!  
We cast our cares away, and quick—  
We brush the roaches off our cheek.  
The summer, how it strives to please  
With yellow-jackets, wasps and fleas,  
Bed-bugs, musketoes and bumble-bees,  
And other things as good as these!

## The Flyaway Afloat:

OR,  
YANKEE BOYS 'ROUND THE WORLD.BY C. D. CLARK,  
AUTHOR OF "YANKEE BOYS IN CEYLON,"  
"CAMP AND CANOE," "ROD AND RIFLE,"  
"THE SEAL HUNTERS," ETC.

"The Yankee Boys in Ceylon" treats of the adventures of a party of young Americans who passed a season in the colonies of Ceylon. The party consisted of three brothers—Dick Ned and Will Wade, who had a schooner yacht, the Flyaway. In Ceylon they met with a serpent-charmer, Abenhuia, and his daughter, Rona. After many adventures, Abenhuia was killed by a tiger, and in dying left his daughter to the care of Dave Sawyer, the captain of the Flyaway, who married her at Colombo, where the Flyaway started out to finish the trip round the world, of which these papers are the record.]

I.  
OFF ACHEEN—THE BATTLE WITH MALAY PI-  
RATES.

The Flyaway, under a press of sail, was running through the strait between the Nicobar islands and the northern point of Sumatra. Over the port bow could be seen the coast of Acheen, the most northern province of the island, a long low line upon the distant horizon. The yacht, as she rose and fell upon the surface of the sea, looked beautiful to the eye of a sailor, and Captain Dave Sawyer wore an air of pride as he took the deck, and watched the light clouds moving away to the east.

"Tell you what, my boys," he said, "it may be a little rough on the inhabitants, but if ever there was a gang of thievish pirates upon the face of the earth, it is the people of these islands. Steal! It's the name for it! Hi, there, Modo! What are you about?"

"Let not the captain sahib be angry with his slave," answered Modo. "I watch for the Malay pirates, whom you Vishwé confound."

"That's all right, Pete," said Ned, "but you don't think that they would have the cheek to pitch into the Flyaway?"

Captain Sawyer laughed heartily.

"It beats all how brassy it makes a lot of boys to have a little good luck. Why, blame all my cats, boys; do you hanker after a fight with the Malays?"

"You bet I do!" replied Ned.

"Then you'd better let out the job. As far as I am concerned I'm always spelling for a row, but when it comes to fighting Malays, Papuans, and Soosoo, *no fun*!" replied Ned.

"Hr!" said Ned, "and Captain Dave brought the glass to his eye, "that's about so, I reckon. And when you see two of the long black casses laying under the land, like a bald-eagle watching a fish-hawk, you know what they mean. Here, Rona, my gal; go below at once."

"No," she protested, in her sweet, musical voice, "Rona will stay if there is danger."

"I don't call it danger," explained Sawyer, with a sniff of disapproval. "You'd better go below, though."

"I was always taught to face danger by my father's side," replied Rona. "Let me stay, at least until there is real danger."

"You'll go when I tell you!"

"Yes."

Sawyer looked over his crew. As we have said, it was a strong one for a yacht, and most of the men were old blue-jackets, who had fought bravely before now. Therefore, when they understood that there was a chance of a row, they brightened up, and began to look eagerly at the proses lying so still and silent under the land; but when the sailing-master gave an order which looked like flight, they began to murmur.

"Stand by sheets and tacks! Ready there, at the wheel! Let her go about as quick as you can for the Straits of Malacca, don't look healthy. Why don't you move, timberbees?"

"Cap'n," cried Sawyer sternly, "is it possible that you have sailed under me so long that you don't know I won't stand a sea lion? Stand by! Do your growling in the fo'c'sle!"

The able seaman touched his hat and slid back to his duty, shaking his head to his mates to intimate that it wouldn't work. The schooner went about like a top, and as her broad sails were spread, it was plain to the waiting Malays that their prey would escape them. At once a gun was fired as a signal, and both proses shot out at once, sailing with remarkable speed, for there is something about the build of the Malay proses which makes them superior to everything except the model American yacht. The Flyaway was a beauty, and as her sails caught the breeze she began to draw away, slowly at first, then

rapidly widening the distance between her and the pirates. But, even as they sailed on, Captain Dave cast anxious glances at the sky above them, and said something to Modo in a low tone. The Cingalese shook his head, and wetting his finger, held it in the air.

"Yes, Captain Sahib; it is as you say." With a doubtful look the captain stepped forward, and scanned the sea and sky more closely.

"Quartermaster Wade!" he called out.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Open the arms chest and deal out arms to the men. Give everyone two revolvers and a cutlass, and distribute rifles. Send Jack Trumbull with household tasks at the most unreasonable hours of the day, to prepare nauseating messes which ought to have strangled him—but unfortunately

him with a constitution of wrought-iron and as many lives as a cat."

Mr. Tootsbury's wife was a sweet-tempered, soft-voiced little body, who at first sincerely believed in and faithfully sympathized with her husband's complaints.

She had not failed, long since, to see the utter absurdity of them, but she was too tender-hearted to wound him by even a seeming indifference. So, with the patience of an angel, and the heroism of a saint, she rose at all sorts of unreasonable hours of the night, or dropped off to sleep at the most unreasonable hours of the day, to prepare nauseating messes which ought to have strangled him—but unfortunately

him with a constitution of wrought-iron and as many lives as a cat."

Mr. Tootsbury was possessed of a moderate competence, and might have lived easily. But whims like his can make terrible inroads on the expense-book. So little Mrs. Tootsbury, with her already overburdened household, had to take on all sorts of unnecessary tasks by taking boarders.

Two of these were sharp young fellows, medical students from a neighboring college. Of course, they saw at once that Mrs. Tootsbury's diseases were nothing in the world by imagination, and it provoked them exceedingly to see her impositions upon a poor, good-natured little wife, whom they highly esteemed.

For her, they dutifully inquired after his health with every day, and listened respectfully to her cheery hopes that he would soon be better, laughing in their sleeves all the time. But, instead of growing better, Mr. Tootsbury seemed determined to grow worse. His torments only increased, until the sharp students saw that, if he was in no danger of dying himself, he would soon succeed in worrying his poor little wife to death; and for her sake something must be done to cure him.

After several important consultations, they hit upon a plan which pleased them. As their first move upon the Tootsbury wife they began to display great anxiety as to the invalid's welfare, inquiring minutely after every symptom, and, when his little wife was not near, feeling his pulse, and holding his tongue and at each other with lugubrious sighs and shakes of the head, and certain vague observations highly interesting to the self-made patient.

His respect for the young doctors began largely to increase. He decided that they were likely to rise high in their profession, and congratulated himself on having at last found some one who understood his case and could sympathize with him as he deserved.

And there Mr. Tootsbury was quite right—indeed he had!

One morning, when they thought the time about arrived for the consummation of their plan, our young students followed their victim when he went out for his usual morning walk.

Keeping behind him, they contrived, as he turned a corner, to come close enough to allow him to overhear their conversation, which they carried on in a half-subdued tone.

"Then you don't think he can live long?" asked one.

"Oh, no. He's bound to die in two or three months at the longest."

"Singular case, isn't it?"

"Wonderful! Never saw anything like it! Compilation of half the diseases under the sun! Terrible case!"

"It's a pity, too. Our host is a worthy man."

"Entirely so. Yes, it's a great pity. Why, I shouldn't be surprised to go up to dinner any day, and find him only a 'cold corpse'."

"Then you think we had better make our own arrangements, once?"

"Indeed I do."

"But are you sure we can get his body?"

"Certainly. It's all arranged. He will be a splendid subject."

Mr. Tootsbury, who had pricked up his ears and been highly interested in the conversation he was overhearing, now began to feel cold chills all over him, and a prickly sensation at the roots of his hair, as if it was preparing to stand on end.

He faced squarely about, and addressed the (seemingly) startled young doctors.

"Gentlemen, was it you were speaking of just now?"

The students colored with apparent confusion, and hesitated to answer.

"Be candid! Speak out! I am bound to know!"

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Mr. Tootsbury, who had pricked up his ears and been highly interested in the conversation he was overhearing, now began to feel cold chills all over him, and a prickly sensation at the roots of his hair, as if it was preparing to stand on end.

He faced squarely about, and addressed the (seemingly) startled young doctors.

"Gentlemen, was it you were speaking of just now?"

The students colored with apparent confusion, and hesitated to answer.

"Be candid! Speak out! I am bound to know!"

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"Then you think we had better make our own arrangements, once?"

"Indeed I do."

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